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## Moroccan immigration in Andalusia. Education in peace and non-violence from the perspective of the NGOs

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### Abstract

Within the framework of a quantitative study called “Peace and Non-Violence in Islam: Social Behaviors of the Moroccan Immigrant Population in Andalusia”—whose aim is to contribute towards improving the integration of Moroccan immigrants living in the Andalusian autonomous community—we analyzed information relating to the role that the NGOs play in developing and transmitting a culture of Peace and Non-Violence, emphasizing the opinion of experts who work with immigrants in Andalusia. These professionals point out that the measures adopted to achieve a culture of Peace and Non-Violence ought to be directed at all citizens, especially the young.

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### 1. Introduction

Moroccan immigration in Spain as a whole began to be significant at the beginning of the 1970s. Since then, the Moroccan colony gradually grew until the Aliens Act came into force in 1985 (Organic Law 7/1985, July 1, on rights and freedoms of aliens in Spain), when there was a rapid increase in the flow of immigrants from Morocco to Spain. After a process of regularization in 1991, there was a sharp rise in the percentage of Moroccans among the foreign population, and it has been increasing slowly but surely ever since. This situation has been reproduced in Andalusia, one of the Spanish autonomous communities with the largest immigrant population, and where there has been a disproportionately greater increase in the number of Moroccan immigrants compared to the rest of Spain (Bellido Jiménez, V and Andreo Tudela, C.: 2004, 18). Andalusia, like Spain in general, has gone from being an emigrant region to one that receives immigrants.

Andalusia is one of the autonomous communities with the highest number of immigrants; it had 1.3% of the total immigrant population in 1998 and 8.4% in 2010. (Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística) [National Institute of Statistics]. The following table shows the rise in the Moroccan immigrant population in the last few years:

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Table 1. Evolution of the Moroccan Immigrant Population in Andalusia

Year	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
Population	14299	16793	25959	40447	56518	84402	94109	111867

Compiled by the author. Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (1996–2010)

A network of interests and identities exists that transcends the limits of the states concerned, and generates a complex set of relationships beyond their control (Cesari: 2002, 10). This fact does not call into question the role of the state as an actor on the international stage, but rather accepts that there are different levels of interaction: global, regional, local and so on. Any interpretation based on globalization may explain the reason why there is an increase in the migratory flow of people from the Third World; however, among other things, it does not serve to explain why the receiving countries perceive a relationship between the phenomenon of immigration and the discourse of delinquency (Bigo D). One of the commonest and most deeply rooted myths in our society—and with the most harmful consequences for immigrants—is to consider them responsible for a disproportionate percentage of the crimes that are committed. Stereotypes seeking to criminalize immigrants are, and always have been, a constant in all receiving societies, and they represent an important factor in distorting perceptions and debates about the problems arising from the different migratory demographic movements. The mass media serve to reinforce the stereotype; they focus on the topic in the news so that occasionally a link is forged between immigration and delinquency, or dramatic negative images are projected, while fewer pictures with a positive slant on immigration are shown (Igartua .J.J, Muñiz C. and Otero J.A: 2006).

Wars, terrorism, the multitude of violent acts occurring daily (murders, ill-treatment, rapes, sentences for adultery, etc.) show the importance of finding the keys to Non-Violence and of building a culture of Peace. To achieve this goal, various international organizations advocate measures that assign an essential role to education, promoting respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):

*“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”* (United Nations Organization: 1948).

## 2. Non-Governmental Organizations

The term non-governmental organization (NGO) was introduced by the United Nations Organization to refer to organizations created by people or bodies independent of the State with which they maintain relationships. They have their own statutes and legal personality, because they are independent of government authorities and have non-profit making objectives that are of public utility. Organizations of this kind have become prominent in the last few years not only because they have grown so much, but because of their help with developing marginalized communities in need, and their work in natural disasters, wars, famines and so on. We present an extract from the research we carried out into the role played by experts employed by NGOs working with the Moroccan immigrant community in Andalusia on the development and transmission of a culture of Peace and Non-Violence in the context of their religious education.

Our aim was to describe, interpret and present their situation, using a quantitative methodology. (Hernández Pou, Priscilla: 2000), although we used various techniques—including some quantitative ones—to obtain information, such as documentary sources, observation and semi-structured interviews complemented by open-ended interviews.

## 3. Analysis and interpretation of the results

First of all, we define the features characterizing the group of experts in our research sample of 621 subjects, who work with the Moroccan immigrant population in Andalusia. Most of the experts in the survey were between 25 and 45 years old—the majority being female (63.6%)—and had university qualifications (86%). In general, they had a high academic level: 41.1% held first degrees, 34.6% diplomas and 10.3% had completed doctorates. Of the remaining participants (13.1%), 4.7% had completed *Bachillerato* (≈High School), 3.7% Vocational Training, 2.8% Secondary School (≈Middle School) and 1.9% Primary School (≈Elementary School). We also point out that the personnel who specialized in working with Moroccan immigrants had a certain amount of experience working with

this community; more specifically, 29.9% had between 1 and 3 years experience, and 28% between 4 and 6 years. Only 8.4% of the staff had less than one year's experience, whereas 15% had been working between 7 and 9 years, and 17.8% for more than 9 years.

### 3.1 Education, Migration and a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence

With regard to what motivates Moroccans to emigrate to Spain, the people we surveyed coincided in stating that the main reasons for coming here were the improvement in work and economic prospects that enabled them and their families to enjoy a higher standard of living. As for the main concerns of the Moroccan immigrant groups, 79.4% of experts mentioned that they raise matters to do with work (job search, improvements in working conditions, etc.) and to a lesser extent, legal advice (7.5%), language questions (5.6%) or training (4.7%).

On the subject of activities promoting coexistence between the immigrant and host communities, 77.6% of the experts surveyed stated that their institutions had been organizing events of this type, while 17.8% said that they had not.

The figures referring to the importance of schooling for the Moroccan population were eloquent: 82.2% of the experts said that the immigrant community set great store by school attendance, while only 9.3% said the opposite. When asked if they thought that Moroccan immigrant pupils are being properly integrated into Andalusian schools, 69.2% answered in the affirmative, although 16.8% felt that school integration is not wholly satisfactory. 64.5% of respondents said that there are many differences between the kind of education that children of Spanish families and those of Moroccan origin receive at school, and only 27.1% answered in the negative, considering that there are no differences.

We wondered about the most effective way of transmitting a culture of Peace and asked respondents to tell us how they thought this might be brought about. We asked them about the most appropriate measures to adopt with the Moroccan immigrant community to achieve a culture of Peace through the school, religion, family, associations, etc., and the majority (84.1%) coincided in seeing the school as a very important means of achieving a culture of Peace, since—along with the family and the peer group—it is one of the most important institutions in the educational development of young people and, therefore, of future citizens.

With reference to religion as a means of obtaining a culture of Peace, 51.4% indicated that it was “very important”, 32.7% said it was “not very important” and 4.7% “not at all important”. A majority of respondents (78.5%) considered that the family was the most important institution for transmitting values that would enable a culture of Peace to be built with the Moroccan immigrant community, although 12.1% expressed the opinion that the influence of the family unit was very slight in this respect. 64.5% of respondents pointed out that non-governmental organizations have a major impact on promoting a culture of Peace, whereas 20.6% considered their contribution was negligible, and 2.8% that they could not achieve it.

Table 2. Means of achieving a Culture of Peace

Groups	Very important	Not very important	Not at all important
NGOs	64.5	20.6	2.8
School	84.1	13.1	0.9
Family	78.5	12.1	0.0
Religion	51.4	32.7	4.7

In short, the experts consider that the school and the family are key institutions for achieving a culture of Peace and Non-Violence with the Moroccan immigrant community, and although the associations and religion play a lesser role, they still have important benefits to offer. 52.3% of the participants in our sample indicated that their NGOs carry out projects that seek to further a culture of Peace and Non-Violence.

We wondered about which particular group would take priority when setting about building a culture of Peace, and asked the experts to indicate their order of preference (first, second and third choices). In the first place, the respondents opted to work with all the different groups without making any distinctions between them (41.1%), whether minors (under the age of 18), young men and women, or adult men and women, although there was less agreement about working specifically with minors (28%) and young men and women (14%). Young men and women were also chosen as the second priority group (24.3%) because of their potential as a group for building a

culture of Peace. These were followed at some distance by minors (9.3%) and adult women (9.3%). In third place, the experts selected the adult men's group (14%), adult women (11.2%) and young men and women (11.2%) as the most suitable. From this we deduced that they think that all groups should be worked with together, with special attention being paid to young men and women.

Table 3: Group selected for working with to build a Culture of Peace (in order of preference)

Groups	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Minors	28%	9.30%	7.50%
Young men and women	14%	24.30%	11.20%
Adult women	6.50%	9.30%	11.20%
Adult men	4.70%	5.60%	14.00%
Others	0%	0 %	2.80%
All together	41.10%	12.10%	11.20%

When we asked the experts to decide on the relevance or otherwise of measures that would foster a culture of Peace and Non-Violence, dialog between citizens of different cultures was the measure that received most support (78.5%), followed by awareness-raising campaigns (77.6%). On the other hand, dialog between the Spanish and Moroccan governments received only 38.3% of favorable responses, in contrast to 56.1% of negative ones. Opinions were divided, however, over whether eliminating ghettos from cities was a measure conducive to a culture of peace, with 43% in favor and 49.5% against.

Table 4: Relevance of measures for building a Culture of Peace

Measures	Yes	No
Dialog between citizens of different cultures	78.5%	15.9%
Awareness-raising campaigns	77.6%	16.8%
Eliminate ghettos	43%	49.5%
Dialog between Governments	38.3%	56.1%

Therefore, in the opinion of experts working with the Moroccan immigrant community in Andalusia who responded to the survey, the most appropriate measures that governments should adopt in order to implement a culture of Peace and Non-Violence, are campaigns to raise awareness among the host population and encourage dialog between the citizens of different cultures.

We would, however, like to show the conclusions we reached after analyzing and interpreting the information obtained from the group of experts working with the immigrant community in Andalusia.

We must strive to make the immigrant community feel fully integrated. To do this, we consider that our efforts should be directed towards promoting a good relationship between the incoming community and the host society and reducing differences in the education received by the children of immigrants, compared to those of the host community. We emphasize the fact that the family is an essential institution for the transmission of values that enable a culture of Peace to be built among the Moroccan immigrant population, even though 12.1% of the experts thought that the family had very little influence in this regard. We believe it is vitally important that the family and school should complement each other to build a culture of Peace and Non-Violence.

The measures adopted to achieve a culture of Peace and Non-Violence should be aimed at all citizens, but fundamentally the young. Raising the awareness of both the immigrant and the host populations should also be an objective, seeking out spaces, including in our daily lives, where genuine intercultural and interreligious dialog at all levels can take place.

We agree with the experts working with immigrants in Andalusia that the most appropriate measures that governments should adopt to implant a culture of Peace and Non-Violence must be directed towards awareness campaigns for the host population and encourage dialog between citizens of different cultures, even between different governments.

In conclusion, we favor the development of intercultural educational programs (at an official, non-official or informal level) that enable the strengthening of values that can bring about better citizenship—such as respect, equality, and a culture of Peace and Non-Violence—that ensure the full freedom of different religious practices according to each culture's own customs and values.

We must work for the integration and acceptance of the Moroccan immigrant community, raising awareness among all groups, particularly minors and young men and women, using various means and educational resources, and seeking spaces where the Andalusian and Moroccan communities can socialize.

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